

**Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher**  
**STRATEGIC FORUM**

Thank you, George, for your introduction and for inviting me to speak here today.

It is both a pleasure and an honor to be addressing all of you for the first time as the Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

Let me first take this opportunity to thank all of you for your commitment to developing a dynamic, strategic, and safe nuclear policy, and allow me to begin by reaffirming my commitment to our shared goals.

For ten years I have had the pleasure representing two of our nuclear labs.

In my new capacity I am excited to represent the entire complex.

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While I am pleased to see so many familiar faces, who over the years have contributed to what has been mostly an insular debate; I hope that our discussions will be the beginning of a larger national debate about America's nuclear policy and its impact across the globe.

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In the 2004 Presidential election, both candidates ranked unsecured nuclear materials as the number one threat to our national security.

Although this raised the national awareness we all know that elections are not won nor lost on nuclear policy.

Unless your platform consists of lobbing nuclear weapons into the men's room at the Kremlin.

In my ten years in Congress, I am accustomed to working with and debating the same handful of Members.

This lack of robust oversight and debate does a disservice to the American people and to you, our scientists.

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Now things have changed.

My goal is to leverage the new Majority in Congress, as well as my Chairmanship of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, to put many of your ideas before the American people.

I am pleased that Speaker Pelosi has already taken the first step in that direction by making the “9-11 Implementation Bill” one of the first bills passed in the first 100 hours.

This sent a clear message to the American people that security is something we take seriously.

One of the provisions of the bill was a section I authored which would create a Director of Nonproliferation at the White House.

The Director would coordinate our various nonproliferation programs at DOE, State, and the Pentagon.

This new position would solve the problems of inconsistent funding, leadership and strategy.

Building on this early initiative, I want to have an honest debate before my committee on all aspects of the problem before us.

In order to do this, we must create a clear understanding of the role and limitations of nuclear weapons in meeting threats to the United States, the proper size of the stockpile; and the right path to transform the complex.

As you debate these matters, I would like to offer two sets of observations and then open it up to questions.

I would like to cover our current nuclear posture and then the potential of the Reliable Replacement Warhead to transform the complex.

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### ***Nuclear Posture***

I support a small but credible arsenal to defend the homeland and uphold our treaty commitments.

What does that mean?

It means that I fundamentally believe that nuclear weapons are a weapon of last resort whose very existence tells any opponent that we have the ability to obliterate them.

Yet we risk the security and safety of the American people if we try to give them a role beyond this.

I agree with some aspects of the new triad as developed in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and believe that if implemented, they would sustain our deterrent for the foreseeable future.

For instance, I believe it is critical that we invest in and rationalize the complex to make it more efficient and responsive to military requirements, evolution in technology, and emerging threats.

I also believe that a renewed emphasis on intelligence and analysis of global threats is a critical means of fulfilling the NPR's goals of delivering assurance, dissuasion, deterrence and defense.

In that regard, I believe that as we develop the defensive leg of the triad missile defense - and enhance our global strike capabilities, we should improve our knowledge of our near-peer competitors, China and Russia, and understand their threat assessments, procurement plans, and evolution in doctrine.

Part of improved deterrence is improved global strike developed with a solid understanding of global trends that prevent strategic surprise.

I fully support improving our conventional strike capabilities.

If General Cartwright can resolve technical issues and foreign concerns about arming ICBMs with conventional payloads, I believe it is an effort worth pursuing.

Furthermore, I believe that the nation would be well served to support the capabilities that fit under the rubric of prompt global strike.

The conventional possibilities in that regard have stunning potential and have to be explored.

Where the NPR, however, is fundamentally wrong is in the emphasis it gives to the nuclear leg of the strike triad.

Beyond the fundamental homeland defense and weapon of last resort missions, I find the case for new types of nuclear weapons and their deterrent value unpersuasive.

To me, a nuclear warhead that spreads radiological debris, that cannot penetrate beyond certain depths and which combatant commanders are reluctant to use against WMD facilities located near population centers, has less deterrent value than an earth-penetrating precision strike warhead or a team of Special Operations forces that can take out an enemy facility.

Indeed, the ramifications of using either the proposed nuclear bunker buster or an existing tactical warhead against a nuclear armed state or the client are so negative that it is hard to imagine a president authorizing their use, thus, rendering them ineffective.

Nuclear weapons are less than appropriate for today's target sets.

If using nuclear weapons was inadequate in the Cold War, my friend General Cartwright summed up the problem of how complicated it is today to try to match the threats we face with our nuclear capabilities in a Post Cold War world.

General Cartwright asks the tough questions:

*“Does this expansion in the number of countries with weapons get matched by the number of warheads?”*

*Is that an appropriate way to look at it?*

*Is it really more of a problem for delivery systems and the appropriate way to do it?*

*Do you have a broad enough range of effect?*

*What we are talking about there is escalation control and confidence-building measures. When you have more than just one adversary, those become much more difficult to manage. It’s more complicated if you are dealing with multiple governments and the way they govern; multiple, different end-states that they might have in mind; and different levels of sophistication in their weapons production and delivery enterprises.”*

In addition to General Cartwright’s observations about nuclear-armed states, nuclear weapons are irrelevant against terrorist organizations that have no facility and no nation to hold at risk.

Some administration officials have described scenarios where nuclear weapons could be used against a state that harbored terrorists who launched a WMD attack against the US or its allies.

Nuclear weapons are not the silver bullet to defeat them.

In fact, the RAND Corporation states that *“no one tool is likely to be decisive against al-Qaeda. An effective strategy for countering the global jihadist movement will necessarily employ a complex mixture of military, intelligence, financial, political, legal, and even social instruments.”*

Nuclear weapons are largely irrelevant against hardened and deeply buried targets when basic tunneling machinery can place facilities beyond their reach.

And that is not withstanding the many negative ramifications in terms of loss of life, fallout and political disaster.

Finally, nuclear weapons are unable to defeat networks like those of AQ Khan.

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It is clear to me that investing in conventional strike capabilities is an imperative, and it is also clear that there are several things we must do to strengthen our deterrent posture as well.

I believe we need to first re-commit ourselves to nonproliferation and the arms control regime, and we need to revitalize the nuclear complex.

We need to undo the damage the Bush administration has done to arms control treaties and reclaim decades of leadership aimed at establishing global norms against the development or acquisition of nuclear weapons.

I am deeply concerned that we are wasting away the capital past Republican and Democratic administrations accumulated by negotiating the Nonproliferation Treaty and our series of agreements with the Russians.

Well before the failed 2005 NPT review conference, the Bush administration had dismissed the CTBT, withdrawn from the ABM Treaty, signed the Moscow Treaty which reduces deployed, but not actual warhead numbers, and called an FMCT unverifiable.

While General Cartwright has supported the administration's line on treaties, he has publicly said that as a warfighter he appreciates the value of treaties including transparency, the ability to generate warning time, and confidence in the intentions of your counterpart.

I have introduced legislation calling on the President to negotiate a verifiable fissile cutoff treaty and on the Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

With regard to the first, I believe that if we are ever to get serious about the task of securing loose nuclear material it is vital that we cap its production.

With regard to the second, many of the concerns about the impact of the CTBT on our ability to sustain our nuclear arsenal were dismissed by a National Academy of Sciences report.

Furthermore, if the promises the Bush administration and scientists at the national labs are making that the Reliable Replacement Warhead program will lead reduce the need for live testing, then ratifying the CTBT should be a central objective of our nation.

With regard to nonproliferation, the most immediate task before us is securing loose nuclear material such as highly enriched uranium and disposing of excess weapons plutonium.

It is critical that we expand our nation's nonproliferation programs to secure loose nuclear material and extend them to countries of concern such as Pakistan and India.

Dick Garwin estimated that civil plutonium from reprocessing operations in Great Britain, France, and Japan would suffice to make more than 10,000 nuclear warheads.

The United States currently spends a little over **one billion dollars** a year on nonproliferation programs.

Yet the Baker-Cutler Task Force recommends **thirty billion** over ten years to secure and dispose of nuclear weapons in Russia.

I fully support this amount and believe that it is also critical that we directly engage the world's most dangerous nuclear hotspots with all of the tools that we have at our disposal.

Deterrence is also about a strong nuclear complex, preferably one with roofs that don't leak.

A lot has been said about the potential for RRW to radically transform the complex.

For some, RRW offers the potential to exercise the talents of our nuclear designers for the foreseeable future.

For others, it offers a safer more secure warhead that is harder for terrorists to steal, uses less dangerous materials like beryllium, will result in an even smaller arsenal and is less likely to need testing.

As many of you know, I am strong believer in RRW, because I strong believer in you and the work that you do.

Part of the challenge of RRW is that it is managed by the same people in the Bush administration who brought us RNEP and who have never been afraid to propose massively expensive new starts.

In order to set some limits and achieve certain deliverables, I worked with my colleagues in setting several requirements for the RRW program -- including that it should increase the reliability, safety and security of the complex; reduce the likelihood of testing, and achieve reductions in the stockpile.

While I remain supportive of the program and believe it can usefully engage all three weapons labs and rationalize the production complex, I was unsettled as were several of my colleagues when Bob Joseph, who is supposed to be the State Department's Under-Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, said that the administration should make no commitment against live testing.

**If it appears that more Bush administration officials believe that RRW will lead to testing, I see no alternative but to terminate funding for the program.**

RRW itself provides a useful opportunity to revitalize the complex and tie it more closely to the needs of the warfighter.

You all understand its promise so I will stress one aspect.

In the entrance to my Washington office, I have a picture of George, myself, and General Cartwright.

I like to refer to it as the Holy Trinity.

It's a telling picture.

In the same frame you have the lab director, the warfighter and Congress. Or put another way: the supplier, the customer and the overseer.

The three elements are intertwined and should be kept in mind when trying to assess how our nuclear posture should evolve to meet future threats and opportunities. Can the supplier provide the capability that the customer needs and Congress will support?

Whatever conclusion you arrive at will involve a set of judgments in three areas:

**You'll have to make judgments about the right profile of investments in the complex:**

What is the right portfolio of funding for the Reliable Replacement Warhead and Life Extension Program?

What is the proper size of the pit facility that will support the stockpile?

What is the proper size of the stockpile itself?

How does one keep the most talented workforce employed at the labs?

**You'll have to make judgments about our posture:**

What are the threats that STRATCOM and our nation have to meet?

Are we adopting a forwarding looking posture that seeks to find new ways and capabilities to defeat tomorrow's threats?

Do we instead want a robust but more defensive posture that places a smaller reliance on nuclear weapons?

**And lastly, you'll have to make judgements about the reaction and involvement of Congress:**

Will members support a brand new program to replace tested LEPs?

Will Congress continue to invest large funds into the complex over a decade after the end of the Cold War?

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In a complex world, clarity about intentions is necessary.

I look forward to your questions.